

**COMPENSATION BOARD OF MADISON COUNTY**  
**June 11, 2020, Meeting Minutes**

On Thursday, June 11, 2020, a meeting of the Madison County Compensation Board came to order at 3:00 p.m. in the Public Meeting Room of the Administrative Office Building in Virginia City, Montana, with Commissioners, Dan Allhands, Chairman, Jim Hart, and Ron Nye; Elected Officials, Phil Fortner, Sheriff, , Karen Miller, Clerk of Courts, Kathleen Mumme, Clerk and Recorder, and Chris Christensen, County Attorney; Public Members John Armstrong, Billie Ratcliffe, Karen Brown, and Ken Walsh present. Laurie Buyan, Commissioners' Assistant, was present to take minutes.

Others in attendance at the meeting were Paula McKenzie, Deputy Clerk and Recorder, Vicki Tilstra, Finance Officer, Britani Allhands, Finance Clerk, Tammy Mahlstedt, Human Resource Generalist, and Bonnie O'Neill, Chief Administrative Officer.

Chairman Allhands opened the Compensation Board meeting and thanked everyone for attending.

Chris Christensen read the statute related to the duties of the Compensation Board, which is to make a recommendation to the Board of Commissioners about an annual increase for three elected officials. That increase then passes down to the rest of the employees.

Vicki Tilstra stated that the suggested Cost of Living Allowance for this year is 1.8% and if that were used, it would be a total increase of \$221,666.51. She also reviewed increases that were given last year and distributed comparisons of other county salaries, cost projections, and the current salary resolution.

Kathleen Mumme stated that she likes to look at Carbon County because they are close to Madison County in size and population and they're elected officials are around \$10,000 higher in salary than Madison County. Karen Miller reviewed a spreadsheet of Elected Official Base Salaries and County Taxable Values that she had provided to the Committee. She noted that Madison County is #6 in taxable values but #22 in elected official salaries. She also stated that in 2016 Madison County was at #18 in salaries so has lost ground in the last few years.

There was review of the discussion from last year's Compensation Board meeting, including that people at the nursing homes are not sticking around because they don't make enough. Vicki noted that the nursing home employees did receive an increase. Billie Ratcliffe asked how this compares to the rest of the County and asked about the Administrator for the facilities. Jim Hart responded that the Director of Nursing at each facility receives \$82,000 and the Administrator receives \$200,000 for both facilities. Billie asked for justification of a salary like that. There was much discussion about this position and Bonnie explained that it is a contracted position, he is not a County employee, and does not receive benefits. There was further discussion about travelers, previous administrators, administrators in training, and difficulties in keeping staff at both nursing homes. The advertising and recruiting process was also discussed.

Karen Miller suggested that there should be a plan to get the elected official salary up to the same amount as other counties with comparable taxable values. She stated that it doesn't need to happen all at once but having a plan to increase the amount each year would be good. There was discussion about why the salaries should be based on taxable values rather than the amount of work that is required. There was also discussion about the services that are provided by the various departments.

Vicki Tilstra noted that we have an insurance committee that was very proactive towards family insurance and the County now provides \$200 per month towards family insurance. It was also noted that overall health insurance premiums went down by 4% this year.

John Armstrong asked about the number of employees that are insured through the County. It was noted that most of those that work the qualifying number of hours are on the insurance unless they are insured through a spouse or someone else, and then they received a \$300 Aflac benefit.

Billie Ratcliffe asked if there was a recommendation. There was discussion about going above the 1.8% COLA and about the fact that deputies and clerks used to be based on a percentage of the elected officials salary but that is no longer the way it is. Kathleen stated that she doesn't believe in giving the higher positions more than the people working under them. She also stated that most department heads are now making more than the elected officials and that it's never been that way. She added that all positions have expertise and that we all work hard.

There was much discussion about percentages and several of the elected officials and public members agreed that everybody should get the same percentage. John Armstrong stated that it's a fact of life that if you give a percentage, the higher paid positions would get more.

There was more discussion about taxable values and where the extra money is going that is being collected. Jack Creek Road, the Courthouse, and school taxes were mentioned.

Following further discussion about having a plan to increase the elected officials each year, Ken Walsh moved to give 2.8% increase across the board to elected officials and staff. Billie Ratcliffe seconded the motion.

Phil Fortner suggested making it 3%. Paula McKenzie asked if there were a 3% increase each year for the next three years, would that get you where you want to be? Ken suggested going 1% over the COLA for the next three years. Chris Christensen stated that if there's a plan, it might not happen because the Compensation Board still needs to meet each year. Billie stated that there might be changes next year due to COVID. Kathleen asked how much the County has received for COVID expenses. Jim replied that the County has not received anything so far, that it has gone to the state who will divvy it out to counties and cities.

Following this discussion, Ken Walsh, Jim Hart, Dan Allhands, Ron Nye, Billie Ratcliffe, Karen Brown, Chris Christensen, and John Armstrong voted aye. Phil Fortner, Karen Miller, and Kathleen Mumme were opposed. The motion carried on a majority vote.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:18 p.m.

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Dan W. Allhands, Chairman  
Board of Madison County Commissioners

Date Approved: June 16, 2020

Minutes prepared by:

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Laurie Buyan, Executive Assistant

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Kathleen Mumme, Clerk and Recorder, Madison County